

Envoy criticizes flu 'discrimination' of Mexicans

May 8 2009, By FRANK JORDANS , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- Nations need common rules for responding to flu outbreaks to prevent discrimination and unfair trade restrictions, Mexico's U.N. envoy said Friday, complaining that Mexican citizens and exports were being unfairly singled out.

Some countries have "developed some attitudes which I will straightforward qualify as discriminatory against Mexicans," Luis Alfonso De Alba said.

The [World Health Organization](#) is looking into the measures countries take in combatting the outbreak and the justifications they give, but WHO has no plans to make the findings public, said spokesman Gregory Hartl.

Mexico has complained that its citizens and exports are being shunned by some countries. It sent a letter the 153 member nations of the World Trade Organization urging them to "withdraw any restrictive measure imposed on Mexican products that is not consistent with the scientific information available."

China has imposed a ban on pork imports from North America. It also has quarantined travelers from Mexico and Canada, and Singapore has started requiring travelers arriving from Mexico to be confined for seven days. No such rules apply to the U.S., which has the second highest number of cases.

"No one should be put in [quarantine](#) solely on the basis of their nationality," said spokesman Rupert Colville of the U.N. human rights office. "That would be an unacceptable and clear-cut case of discrimination."

Some European governments have been telling their citizens to delay nonessential travel to Mexico without making similar recommendations for the United States or Canada.

In its latest update on the outbreak Friday, WHO said there have been some 2,500 confirmed human cases of [swine flu](#). Mexico accounts for about half of all cases, and all but two of 45 confirmed deaths. Brazil became the latest country to acknowledge the presence of the disease Friday, when it formally declared four cases to WHO.

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